

VZCZCXR07988

PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHFK RUEHHM RUEHKSO RUEHNH RUEHPB

DE RUEHKO #4800/01 2851143

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 121143Z OCT 07

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8546

INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZU/ASIAN PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION PRIORITY

RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY 2272

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHMFISS/USFJ PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 004800

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

EAP/MLS FOR AARON COPE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/12/2017

TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM BM JA

SUBJECT: JAPAN,S RESPONSE TO ENCOURAGING BROAD SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY IN BURMA

REF: TOKYO 04699

Classified By: Charge D' Affairs Joseph R. Donovan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) Japan seeks a larger role in efforts to bring about democracy and respect for human rights in Burma, but realizes it lacks the leverage and influence necessary to bring about change, MOFA International Cooperation Division Deputy Director General Reiichiro Takahashi told Embassy Tokyo Aid Counselor and Political Officer on October 12. Increased Japanese efforts are unlikely to counter China and India,s influence, and even though the Japanese media and politicians are calling for change, there is no substance to Japan,s &special relationship8 with Burma, he said. DDG Takahashi said that MOFA will not exclude the possibility of canceling aid projects to Burma, but at this time will only halt the Japan-Myanmar Human Resources Promotion Facility project, curtail police training, and increase scrutiny of selective trainees and scholars. While MOFA is currently reviewing all aid programs to Burma, Japan has no plans to expand assistance, and will continue technical cooperation via JICA. During an October 12 meeting with Foreign Minister Komura, the International Cooperation Bureau senior officials will recommend Japan cancel plans to build the Japan-Burma Human Resources Promotion Facility building (i.e. Japan-Burma Cultural Center at Rangoon University, and following cabinet approval early next week, Japan will publicly announce its decision to cancel the project, Takahashi shared.

Burma Aid Already &Extremely Limited8

¶2. (C) According to MOFA International Cooperation Division Deputy Director General Reiichiro Takahashi, Japan significantly reduced aid to Burma in 1998 following a series of events, and with the 2003 arrest of Aung Sang Suu Kyi, further limited cooperation. Since then its aid has remained extremely limited. In 2005, DDG Takahashi explained, there were 1200 interventions of JICA experts in Burma, whereas there are only currently only 25 JICA long-term experts residing there now. The majority of Japanese grant aid assistance, including polio vaccinations and the reproductive health project, is already channeled through UNICEF. Japan, in a bid to promote social and economic change, will continue efforts to provide technical cooperation, i.e., experts, and has no plan to halt this technical assistance. MOFA is currently reviewing all Japanese assistance to Burma, and will not exclude the possibility of stopping future grant aid and technical assistance projects, but at this point only

plans to cancel the Human Resources Development Center at the University of Rangoon.

¶13. (C) Rather than halt projects, DDG Takahashi stated that Japan will be more selective when scrutinizing potential Burmese recipients of scholarships and training programs in a bid to ensure training will not directly benefit the regime. For example, police training will be curtailed. Since Japanese ODA aid requires government-to-government discussions, some future aid projects may have indirect ties to the Burmese regime, he cautioned. If the two governments cannot agree on which Burmese officials will participate, Japan will cancel or indefinitely postpone the project, he said. MOFA is currently reviewing all aid programs to Burma, and has no plans to expand grant aid, but will continue technical cooperation via the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

¶14. (C) DDG Takahashi told Aid Counselor and Political Officer that during the October 12 meeting with Foreign Minister Komura, senior MOFA officials will recommend Japan cancel plans to build an additional Japan-Burma Human Resources Promotion Facility building, and following a cabinet approval early next week, will publicly announce the decision to cancel the project. DDG Takahashi said that grant aid for current projects such as the Project for the Afforestation in the Dry Zone; the Eradication of Opium Poppy Cultivation and Poverty Reduction Project in Kokang Special Region; the Ayayawady Delta Integrated Mangrove Rehabilitation and Management Project; the Joint Research Project on Traditional Medicines; Project on ICT Human Resource Development at the ICT Training Institute; and the Rural Water Supply in the Central Dry Zone will continue.

TOKYO 00004800 002 OF 002

¶15. (C) Japan's grass roots grants administered by the Japanese Embassy consisted in 2007 of 28 small-scale projects, such as the rehabilitation of village schools and hospitals, Takahashi noted. Japan channels its aid through Japanese, local and international NGOs, to provide grass roots grants addressing humanitarian needs. In 2007, there are only four Japanese NGOs operating in Burma. Reducing these small grants directed toward humanitarian assistance will not positively impact the Burmese regime, he stated.

Japan's &Special Relationship8 With Burma A Mere Memory

¶16. (C) DDG Takahashi affirmed that Japan is committed to working with the United States on donor cooperation to avoid duplicating efforts, will continue to use aid to promote democracy and respect for human rights, and agrees on the need to strengthen dialogue on aid issues. However, frankly speaking, Japan has little influence on the Burmese regime, Takahashi shared. The days of Japan's &special relationship are over8 and rather than substance, only fond memories remain, he asserted. For example, Japanese Ambassador to Burma Nogawa arrived on September 9 but still has not presented his credentials to the Burmese Government, due to &lack of enthusiasm8 on the part of the Burmese. Takahashi said he was &personally disappointed8 Burma is wasting the opportunity for economic development. Japan will continue to scrutinize its Burma aid closely, but DDG Takahashi opined that frankly Japan lacks the necessary leverage to influence Burma. Japan would like to play a larger role, but due to Chinese and Indian influence, there is slim possibility Japan can influence Burma to promote democracy and human rights.

DONOVAN